

# Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment



## Child Safeguarding Statement St Joseph's Primary School for Children with Visual Impairment

**St Joseph's Primary School for Children with Visual Impairment** is a special school providing primary/post-primary education to pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class/L1LP. All of our pupils have a visual impairment and a significant number also have additional needs.

In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Addendum to Children First (2019), the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023) and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of **St Joseph's Primary School for Children with Visual Impairment** has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement set out in this document.

- 1 The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* as part of this overall Child Safeguarding Statement
- 2 The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is **Muriel Weekes**
- 3 The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is **Triona Taaffe**
- 4 The Relevant Person is **Muriel Weekes**  
*(The relevant person is one who can provide information in respect of how the child safeguarding statement was developed and will be able to provide the statement on request. In a school setting the relevant person shall be the designated liaison person.)*
- 5 The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the school will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school will:

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

6 The following procedures/measures are in place:


- In relation to any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child attending the school, the school adheres to the relevant procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (revised 2023)* and to the relevant agreed disciplinary procedures for school staff which are published on the gov.ie website.
- In relation to the selection or recruitment of staff and their suitability to work with children, the school adheres to the statutory vetting requirements of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 and to the wider duty of care guidance set out in relevant Garda vetting and recruitment circulars published by the Department of Education and available on the gov.ie website.
- In relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to staff in respect of the identification of the occurrence of harm (as defined in the 2015 Act) the school-
  - Has provided each member of staff with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
  - Ensures all new staff are provided with a copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement
  - Encourages staff to avail of relevant training
  - Encourages Board of Management members to avail of relevant training
  - The Board of Management maintains records of all staff and Board member training
- In relation to reporting of child protection concerns to Tusla, all school personnel are required to adhere to the procedures set out in the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (revised 2023)*, including in the case of registered teachers, those in relation to mandated reporting under the Children First Act 2015.
- All registered teachers employed by the school are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.
- In accordance with the Children First Act 2015 and the Addendum to Children First (2019), the Board has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while attending the school or participating in school activities. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified and the school's procedures for managing those risks is included with the Child Safeguarding Statement. In this assessment, particular attention has been given to the risks that are particular to our school setting where all the children are either blind or have low vision. The assessment is available on request from the school office.
- In relation to the policies and procedures mentioned in the Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment, the school has sought to take into account that all of our pupils have a visual impairment and that some have additional/complex needs. The Risk Assessment is on display with the Child Safeguarding Statement and is available on request at the school office.
- The various procedures referred to in this Statement can be accessed via the school's website, the gov.ie website or will be made available on request by the school.

**Note:** The above is not intended as an exhaustive list. Individual Boards of Management shall also include in this section such other procedures/measures that are of relevance to the school in question.

- 7 This statement has been published on the school's website and has been provided to all members of school personnel, the Parents' Association (if any) and the patron. It is readily accessible to parents and guardians on request. A copy of this Statement will be made available to Tusla and the Department if requested.
- 8 This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this statement refers.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was adopted by the Board of Management on **27<sup>th</sup> September 2024**.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on **27<sup>th</sup> September 2024**.

Signed:   
Chairperson of Board of Management  
Date: 27/9/24

Signed: Muriel Weches  
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management  
Date: 27/9/24



## Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment

### Written Assessment of Risk of St Joseph's Primary VI

In accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 and with the requirements of Chapter 8 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (revised 2023)*, the following is the Written Risk Assessment of [name of school].

#### 1. List of school activities

- Care given by bus escort/s to children en route to and from school
- Arrival and dismissal times in yard, at start and end of school day
- Classroom teaching: regular and substitute staff
- Provision/ assistance in class associated with accommodations for visual impairment
- Children's transitions around school building: alone, in pairs, in groups, with sighted guide/s
- Use of toilet/ intimate care assistance for children those who require it
- Assistance with feeding for children who require it, including specialised procedures by trained staff
- Heating of food from home for pupils who cannot eat school lunch, as agreed with ChildVision SLT Dysphagia advisor and parents
- Support of pupils with additional vulnerabilities/ needs, i.e. non-verbal, general learning disabilities, physical disabilities, behavioural disorders in accessing curriculum, socialisation and care needs
- Transfers for children with physical disabilities involving manual assistance/ use of hoist
- Yard Times
- Preparation by staff for specialised lunches
- Lunch Times in classrooms
- Class activities on ChildVision campus: PE Hall, Rebound, library, Garden.
- Class activities off campus in local area
- Swimming: changing, showering, pool time
- Football on Grass Patch
- Use of Sensory Room
- Participation by pupils in religious ceremonies at St. Joseph's Church
- One-to-one teaching in school building
- One-to-one Orientation and Mobility lessons, on and off campus
- One-to-one withdrawal for therapy sessions/ assessment clinic at ChildVision/ visit to ChildVision Nursing Station
- Group withdrawal for therapy sessions
- Whole School outdoor events: Sports Day; Clean Up Action Day
- School trips, involving travel by private or public transport, e.g. Summer Outing Córfhéile, Public Swimming Pool, etc.
- Management of challenging behaviour amongst pupils, including appropriate use PETMA - trained staff of positive handling techniques as agreed in a child's positive behaviour plan, if required.
- Care by school staff of any child with suspected infectious illness awaiting collection
- Administration of First Aid by Staff
- Supervision of Self-Administration of Medication
- Administration of Medication by ChildVision Nurse
- Administration of specified emergency medicine by trained school staff to a child in the case of a seizure, if ChildVision nurse is not available within the specified time frame.
- Administration of suctioning by trained school staff to a child when required on the school bus or in school if a ChildVision nurse is not available.

- Curricular provision in respect of SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe, Walk Tall
- Implementation of Positive Behaviour Code, including sanctions
- Prevention of and dealing with bullying amongst pupils or discrimination against pupils from ethnic minorities; members of the Travelling community, LGBT children or those perceived to be LGBT+; pupils of minority religious faiths
- Training of school personnel in Child Protection matters
- Reporting and recording incidents of harm
- Support of children in foster care
- Support of children in families experiencing pressure
- Recruitment of school personnel: Teachers SNAs (including subs); Secretary; Dinner Lady
- External Sports Coaches
- Visits to school from Chaplain/ External Tutors/ Guest Speakers
- School activities involving Volunteers/Parents
- Students participating in work experience in the school
- Student teachers undertaking training placement in school
- Visitors/contractors present in school during school hours, Sanitary Bin collectors, Book Club Reps, emergency repairs, etc.
- Visitors/contractors present during after school activities
- Use of Information and Communication Technology for school work by pupils in the school and home setting- safe and responsible use, privacy.
- Use of video/photography/other media by school to record school events
- Parents or visitors taking photos at school events
- After school use of school premises by other organisations

**2. The school has identified the following risk of harm in respect of its activities -**

- Risk of harm not being recognised by school personnel
- Risk of harm not being reported properly and promptly by school personnel
- Risk of harm due to Garda Vetting requirements being overlooked
- Risk of child being harmed in the school by a member of school personnel
- Risk of child being harmed in the school by another child
- Risk of child being harmed in the school by a volunteer
- Risk of child being harmed by a visitor who is expected at the school for a specified purpose during school hours, e.g. speaker/ professional/ delivery of service
- Risk of child being harmed by entrance of unexpected visitor, due to entrance door being left open or due to procedures for visitors not being followed; this includes delivery of goods/services
- Risk of harm due to inadequate supervision of children in school, taking cognisance of vulnerabilities due to their visual impairments and any additional needs. This could arise due to negligence or under-staffing
- Risk of child being harmed by a member of school personnel, a member of staff of another organisation or other person while child/ren are participating in school activities at ChildVision facility or off campus
- Risk of harm due to lack of provision of appropriate training for school personnel assisting child: induction, sighted guiding, patient handling, administration of agreed medical procedures including specialised feeding, Rebound, restraint.
- Risk of harm due to bullying of child by another child or by an adult
- Risk of harm due to inappropriate relationship/communications between child and another child or adult
- Risk of harm to child while a child is receiving assistance at the toilet or intimate care

- Risk of harm due to inadequate code of behaviour or failure to implement the code
- Risk of harm in one-to-one sessions with school personnel or supporting therapist
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel communicating with pupils in an inappropriate manner via social media, texting, digital device or other manner
- Risk of harm caused by member of school personnel or a child accessing/circulating inappropriate material via social media, texting, digital device or other manner
- Risk of harm due to child accessing and using school computer or other device while at school for purposes other than teacher-directed educational ones
- Risk of child's unsafe use of school Office 365 student account in the school or home setting
- Risk of harm due to child's irresponsible use of online learning tools in the school or home setting which may result in privacy or data breaches

**3. The school has the following procedures in place to address the risks of harm identified in this assessment -**

- All school personnel have been familiarised with the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (revised 2023) and have been made aware that there is a digital copy available online <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/12bee3-child-protection-procedures-in-schools/> or on the school Sharepoint.
- All school personnel, including new and substitute staff, are provided with a copy of the school's *Child Safeguarding Statement*
- School Personnel are informed about, and are required to adhere to, the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (revised 2023) and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the *Children First Act 2015*
- The school encourages all school staff and members of the Board of Management to avail of ongoing relevant training in Child Protection. Records of all staff and Board member training are kept.
- The school adheres to requirements concerning recruitment, i.e. Teaching Council registration and/or Garda vetting, in line with legislation and relevant DES circulars.
- The school requires staff appointed to the school to have a *Statutory Declaration* witnessed by a solicitor/ commissioner of oaths.
- The school provides new staff appointed with a *School Information Booklet* including information about Child Protection and other related policies.
- The school has a *Substitute Staff Policy* and requires a casual substitute teacher or SNA to sign a *Form of Undertaking*.
- The school has in place an *External Tutors/ Coaches and Volunteers Policy* and procedures for the use of external persons to supplement delivery of the curriculum.
- The school has a *Student Teacher on Placement policy* and procedures in place in respect of student teacher placements.
- The school has signs in place to indicate location of toilets for adult use and to prohibit use of children's toilets by adults.
- The school implements in full the *Stay Safe, Walk Tall* and RSE Programmes.
- The school implements in full the SPHE curriculum.
- The school has an *Anti-Bullying Policy* which fully adheres to the requirements of

- the Department's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.
- The school has a Positive Behaviour Policy and Code which includes expectations for school personnel as well as the children.
  - The school adheres to the *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers* and complies with the agreed disciplinary procedures for teaching staff.
  - The school has a *Bus Escort Policy* outlining the bus escort's responsibility of care toward the children they accompany and supervise.
  - The school has a *Supervision Policy* to ensure appropriate supervision of children during assembly, dismissal and breaks and in respect of specific areas such as bathrooms, etc.
  - The school has a *Lone Working Policy* and clear procedures regarding the safe and accountable operation of 1:1 activity.
  - The school has an *Intimate Care Policy/plan* in respect of students who require such care.
  - The school has an *Illness, Medication and Medical Procedures Policy* in place informing Safe practices around the care of children who become ill at school; protection from infection for other children; administration of medication (by Child Vision nurse); administration of emergency medication in case seizure by trained school staff where ChildVision nurse is not available within the specified time frame; administration of suctioning; preparation and administration of approved specialised feeding procedures by trained school staff; and the supervision by school staff of approved self- administration of medication.
  - The school has a *Health and Safety Policy*.
  - The school has in place clear procedures and a *Risk Assessment* in respect of school outings
  - The school has in place an *Accident/ Injury Policy* which includes procedures for the administration of First Aid.
  - The school has in place an *Acceptable Use Policy* in respect of usage of ICT by pupils and staff. Use of Mobile Phones is also covered in *Positive Behaviour Policy and Code*.
  - The school has a *Challenging Behaviour Policy* and a *VI and Autism Policy* which address the management of behaviours where a child could be at risk of harm or could put another child at risk of harm.
  - The school uses a *Parental Consent Form for Orientation and Mobility* in cases where the child will be working 1:1 with a tutor who is not registered with the Teaching Council
  - The school undertook staff training in PETMA (Professional, Ethical and Therapeutic Management of Aggression Training) and its *Challenging Behaviour Policy* is being used in light of this training.
  - The school has in place a *Critical Incident Management Plan*.

**Important Note:** It should be noted that risk in the context of this risk assessment is the risk of “harm” as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and not general health and safety risk. The Definition of harm is set out in Chapter 4 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*

In undertaking this risk assessment, the board of management has endeavoured to identify as far as possible the risks of harm that are relevant to this school and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage all risks identified. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risk of harm, the school has in place the procedures listed in this risk assessment to manage and reduce risk to the greatest possible extent.

Important Note: It should be noted that risk in the context of this risk assessment is the risk of “harm” as defined in the Children First Act, 2015 and not general health and safety risk. The definition of harm is set out in chapter 4 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (revised 2023)*.